

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-09 ISO-00 EB-08 DODE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

TO USDOC WASHDC

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5286

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS DHAHRAN 0263

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI RAILROAD NETWORK

REF: USDOC 02329, DHAHRAN 0029

1. QUESTION RAISED IN PARA 2 OF REF DEPTTEL, RE JAPANESE PROPOSAL FOR SAUDI RAIWAY PROJECTS, WAS DISCUSSED WITH ASS'T DIRECTOR-GENERLA (D-G) FOR ENGINEERING, SAUDI GOVERNMENT RAILROAD CORPORATION (SGRO), WHO EXPLAINED THAT NEGOTIATION ARE BEING CARRIED ON AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL IN RIYADH. COMMENTING -WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT", HE EXPLAINED THAT ONLY INFORMATION HE HAD WAS WHAT HE HAD CLIPPED FORM NEWSPAPERS. ONE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE REPORTED THAT ENTIRE PROJECT WOULD COST SR 5 BILLION WHICH, ACCORDING TO SGRO OFFICIAL, SEEMED TOO LOW CONSIDERING MAGNITUDE OF PROJECT.

2. ONLY SGRO OFFICIAL WHO MAY BE ABLE TO ANSWER QUESTION POSED IN REF DEPTTEL IS DIRECTOR-GENERAL SHEHAIL. HE IS CURRENTLY TRAVELLING OUTSIDE OF SAUDI ARABIA AND WE SHALL RAISE QUESTION WITH HIM UPON HIS RETURN. PERHAPS, IN UNCLASSIFIED

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MEANTIME, AMEMBASSY JIDDA CAN OBTAIN INFORMATION REQUESTED FROM SAG MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS.

3. THIS WEEK CONGENOFF ASKED ACTING D-G OF SGRO ABOUT IMMEDIATE PLANS TO IMPROVE RAILROAD NETWORK. HE EXPLAINED THAT RAILROAD IS CURRENTLY OPENING BIDS FOR CONTRACT TO UPGRADE AND RE-ENGINEER 105 KM OF SGRO MAINLINE ROADBED.

IN ITS BUDGET REQUEST FOR NEXT FY, SGRO HAS ASKED FOR FUNDS TO DO DESIGN-ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION OF RAILROAD TO JUBAIL -- A NEW INDUSTRIAL CITY BEING BUILT 45 MILES NORTH OF HERE. ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT EARLIEST SGRO COULD RECEIVE FUNDS FOR WEST-OF-RIYADH EXPANSION WOULD BE IN FY 78-79 BUDGET.

4. ASSISTANT D-G FOR ENGINEERING EXPLAINED THAT SGRO HAS CONTRACTED WITH TECHNITAL, VIA CATTANEO 20, 37100 VERONA, TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO SGRO. TECHNITAL HAS TWO TECHNICIANS IN COUNTRY AND IS BUILDING UP TO 20 BY MID 1977.

5. RE VISIT OF ALGHESON, HE SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME IN HOUSTON AND, BECAUSE OF UNSEASONABLY COLD WINTER IN US, DID MOST OF HIS CONSULTING BY TELEPHONE WITH COMPANIES HE HAD PLANNED TO CALL ON WHILE IN US. HE STATED THAT HE HAD USEFULL MEETING WITH HOUSTON DISTRICT OFFICE DIRECTOR FELIX GUERRARO AS PER PARA 3 OF OUR REFTTEL.
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